Denis Dyomkin
Ex-Reuters Senior Correspondent | Eurasia & Beyond | Eyewitness Archive

#fieldmemoirs
New York traffic is notorious, especially during the United Nations General Assembly, when dozens of world leaders descend on Manhattan. The French president recently made headlines when his car was stuck like a regular New Yorker.

For me, UNGA gridlock once turned into a blessing in disguise.

In 2015, covering the UNGA as part of the travelling press, I was thrilled; so much that I left my wallet, phone and all documents in a taxi after a pleasant small talk with the cabbie. Once in the street, the gravity of my situation as a foreigner hit me. My soccer years likely helped me chase the cab four intersections later. Thanks to the jams, it was still crawling. You should have seen the driver's face when I, out of breath, tapped his window: "Hello again."

That personal crisis was averted by the chaos. Inside UN HQ, the professional crises were harder to outrun.

Hours earlier, I'd covered the top story of the day: Obama and Putin sparring for 90 minutes over Assad's future https://lnkd.in/ggfaHzgY. Days later, Russia launched air strikes in Syria, its biggest Middle East intervention in decades.

I was privileged to work with Reuters veterans Louis, Michelle, Howard, Parisa and others; received global newsroom recognition:

"Denis Dyomkin did a fantastic job trailing Russian President Putin and Foreign Minister Lavrov. His snaps and quotes to the U.N. bureau helped ensure Reuters coverage of the Syria crisis and the sudden confrontation between Washington and the Kremlin over the Syrian war was faster, smarter and more comprehensive than the competition. For example, Denis filed the first Russian denial of accusations by the West that Russia was bombing the wrong targets in Syria. (And Denis got a nice color story as well when the Russian U.N. ambassador complained that Obama seems to think he owns U.N. headquarters and can do whatever he wants there https://lnkd.in/grUw8DCT It appears our competitors missed that one.)"

Fast forward to UNGA 2016.

Russia had just been accused of bombing a humanitarian convoy in Syria, shattering a fragile ceasefire.

Maria Zakharova who a year earlier dismissed criticism as a “distortion of facts” https://lnkd.in/g-hStWYq was again denying responsibility.

I was the only foreign newswire present. When the spokeswoman insisted there were “no facts” to accuse Russia, I filed the flash https://lnkd.in/ghBTY5Hm. Russians waited - until their editors called after our story hit the wires. They self-censored, later explaining: We felt it was off the record.

Zakharova angrily ordered that I be escorted out of the area while Russian reporters looked on in eerie silence. The Kremlin wanted Western wires like Reuters/Bloomberg/AFP/AP for legitimacy. But it also expected us to behave like state media. Didn’t happen.

Fullout: https://lnkd.in/gxPmgnJw
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Personal reflections from a former Reuters Kremlin correspondent.
#Historical_Journalism

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GRAVES

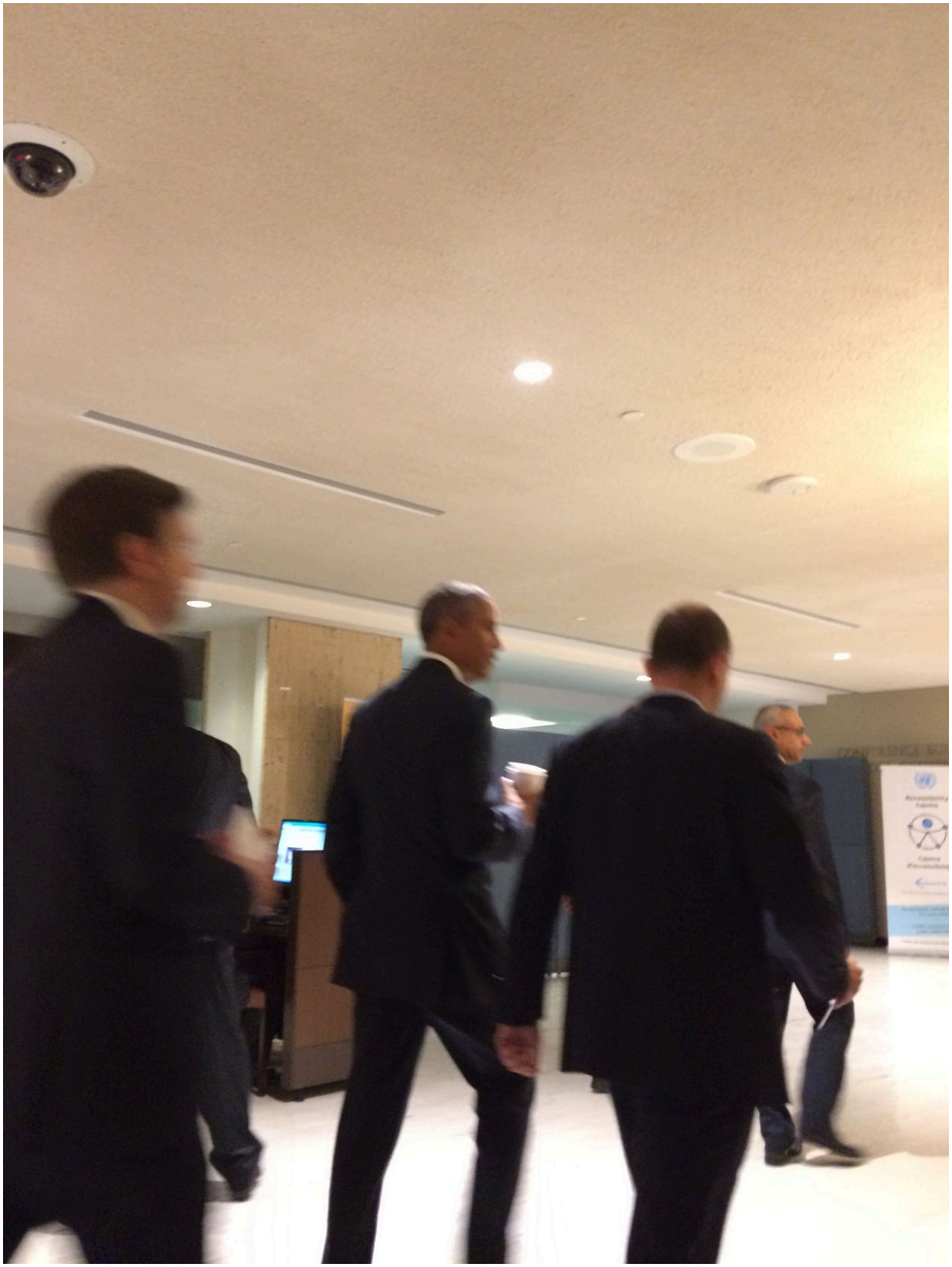
Russian envoy complains U.N. building under 'Obama's command'

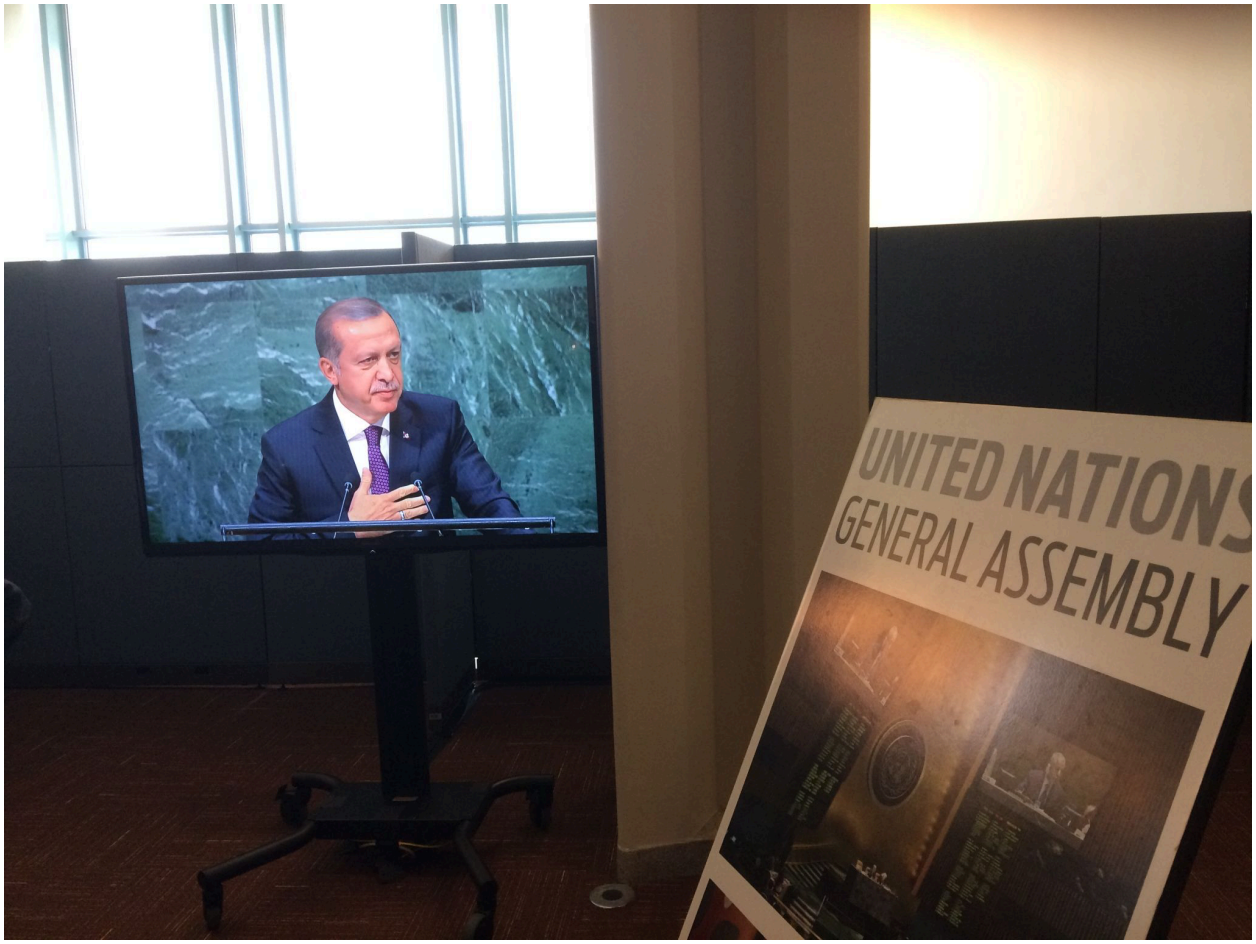
By **Denis Dyomkin**

September 29, 2015 1:04 PM EDT · Updated September 29, 2015

Russian ambassador to the United Nations Vitaly Churkin speaks during a news conference at the U.N. headquarters in New York September 2, 2015. REUTERS/Brendan McDermid Purchase Licensing Rights

UNITED NATIONS (Reuters) - Russia's U.N. envoy complained about the presence of Kosovo




UNITED NATIONS
GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Russia denies U.S. officials' assertion Moscow bombed Syria convoy

By **Reuters**

September 20, 2016 6:20 PM EDT · Updated September 20, 2016

Aa

UNITED NATIONS (Reuters) - Russia's foreign ministry spokeswoman denied on Tuesday an assertion by U.S. officials' that they believe Moscow was responsible for an air strike on a United Nations aid convoy.

Maria Zakharova told reporters at the United Nations that the U.S. administration "has no facts" to support the claim, adding: "We have nothing to do with this situation."

Reporting by Denis Dyomkin; Editing by Howard Goller

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